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BT

newsletter

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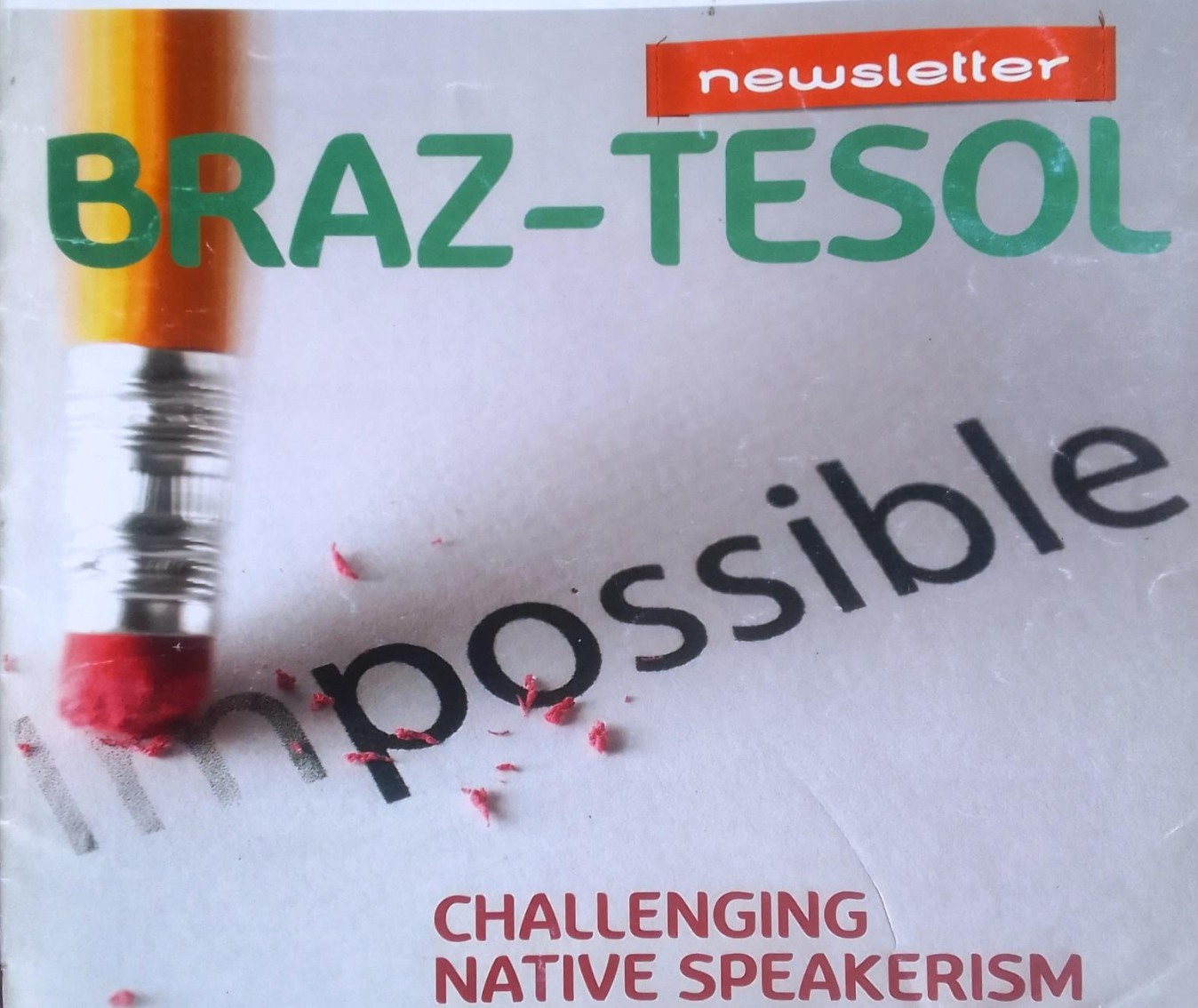

CHALLENGING NATIVE SPEAKERISM IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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BRAZ-TESOL

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DEAR BRAZ-TESOLERS,

We at BRAZ-TESOL have been very busy in the past few months, and we have a lot to share with you in this very special issue.

First of all, as you already know, we are putting the finishing touches on an amazing event for all of you – our first Technology Seminar. It is being held in São Paulo, at Cultura Inglesa Higienópolis, on July 17 and 18. We are honored to have some very illustrious speakers lined up for the seminar – Giselle Santos, Paulo Dantas, Graham Stanley, Ana Maria Menezes, Jeff Kuhn, Carla Arena, Sérgio Lins, Bruno Lancellotti, Jennifer Verschoor, Rick Rosenberg and Gustavo González – and we're expecting a full house! It's very important that you register now, as this is strictly on a first come, first served basis, and there are very few places left! Don't miss out! (Find out much more about the seminar and register by visiting our website: http://braz-tesol.org.br/TechnologySeminar/.)

Secondly, our local chapters have also been very busy in the past months, and some amazing BT events took place all over the country in the first semester: Brasília, Goiânia, Caruaru, Recife, as well as an upcoming local event in Londrina on July 24. You'll find out much more about these events, along with pictures, posters and short accounts of what went on in all of them in one of the new sections in this issue: *Around the Country – The Chapters*. Be sure to participate in the many more which are coming next term.

The other new section in this quarter's issue is the *SIG Corner*. As you know, SIG stands for Special Interest Group, and we currently have seven SIGs at BRAZ-TESOL: Bilingualism, EduTech, Intercultural Language Education, Leadership and Management, Pronunciation, Teacher Development, and Young Learners. We'll now have a special article produced by members of one of our SIGs in every new issue. This month, Rafael Reis, Bruna Caltabiano, Marcelo Dalpino, Sérgio Monteiro and Christina Riego, from the LAM (Leadership and Management) SIG, talk to us about performance indicators (PIs), and how to measure success. In September, our next number, we'll hear from the guys in the TD (Teacher Development) SIG.

Finally, and before I brag about this issue's thought-provoking articles, from our September edition onwards we'll have yet another new section in our *BT Newsletter*: the *BT News Interviews*. In this section, as the name suggests, we'll be interviewing one inspirational English teacher in each issue. They'll talk a little about their careers, give suggestions on professional development, language development, tips for students and much more. And we're counting on your help! Send the name of a teacher/teacher trainer you have worked with (or learned from) to newsletter@braztesol.org.br, telling a little bit about the person you've chosen and why he or she is the one you'd like to see in our pages. The deadline for the September issue is August 7, so drop us a line as soon as you can!

In the first article this month, Ilá Coimbra tells us about a rather unnerving experience she had when offered a teaching job in an immersion course abroad. "Do you mind saying you're not Brazilian?" is what she was asked, allegedly so that students would not complain about having crossed an ocean to have classes with a nNEST (non-native English-speaking teacher). What would you do? Would you have lied?

Cintia Rodrigues, in the second article, gamely owns up to feeling a bit uncomfortable speaking English when there are (the dreaded!) native speakers around, something I'm sure we've all experienced – I know I have, and do! Cintia shares some very interesting personal accounts – including one involving the great Jeremy Harmer! – and ends by suggesting ways in which we can overcome this difficulty.

In the third article, Thiago Veigga takes on the native vs. non-native teacher discussion, suggesting, among other things, that *there are so many realizations of English around the world that the simplistic dichotomy between native and non-native English speaker teachers is untenable*. Hear, hear! Thiago's great article is yet one more step taken towards debunking the fallacious myth that a teacher can be judged by the color of their passport.

As mentioned above, our fourth article is our SIG Corner, which this month brings *Assessing Quality and Measuring Results*, by the LAM SIG team. In it you'll learn about measuring and assessing quality of courses and classes based on indicators such as students' satisfaction levels, absenteeism, class observation and much more, and the impact such assessments can have on the success of an organization.

In *Passport Control*, our fifth article, Divya Madhavan, tell us that we, teachers, are in the business of managing barriers, once people today *learn English because it's English, the passport to an internationally validated identity*. In her riveting piece, Divya goes on to talk about what it means to teach English, teaching and consciousness, and much more. She ends by saying that – and I hope this is not a spoiler – *teaching is a project towards understanding whole environments, where problems are interpreted with depth and solutions are found in journeys of dialogue. It doesn't just raise awareness, it becomes awareness. Conscientização.* (Yes, like that! In Portuguese!)

Last, but by no means least, our sixth and last article brings us Marek Kiczkowiak's wise words on *Challenging Native-speakerism in the EFL Classroom*, to wrap up and title this issue. Marek, who is the founder of what is in my opinion one of the most exciting blogs to have been bestowed on ELT in quite a while (TEFL Equity Advocates: www.teflequityadvocates.com), gives us a little bit of his personal history, a lot of theoretical background to substantiate his claims, and, perhaps most importantly, some very useful ideas on how to tackle this seeming preference for native-speaking teachers in the classroom, with our students.

That's it, then. Thank you very much for reading! I also want to thank Ilá, Cintia, Thiago, Rafael, Bruna, Marcelo, Chris, Sérgio, Divya and Marek for their brilliant articles, and my friends Valéria França and Marcelo Barros for all the proofreading and invaluable suggestions.

See you all at the Technology Seminar!

Higor Cavalcante
Editor

In the past few months, many of our local chapters around the country have held very successful events for their local ELT communities. Find out more about them below.

BRAZ-TESOL Pernambuco

Eduardo Santos, president of our Pernambuco chapter, shares with us a bit about the events in Caruaru and Recife last May.

"For the first time, BRAZ-TESOL PE had an event for teachers outside Recife. It took place in Caruaru on Saturday, May 9th. Teachers from nearby cities also came to the event, named "Sharing Ideas That Work", in order to promote the interaction amongst educators and also get them acquainted with the work BRAZ-TESOL does to encourage professional development. For some, this was the first they had heard about BRAZ-TESOL and were excited to be part of a moment in which they could share stories of difficulties faced in the classroom and stories of success.

On May 30th, we had our event in Recife under the same theme "Sharing Ideas that Work". Anderson Leite, sponsored by Cambridge University Press, and Damian Williams, shared ideas tested and approved by teachers. The practical aspect of the sessions was suggested by teachers on our Facebook page.

Next semester we plan to promote two more events, one in Recife and another one in the interior."

Participants in Recife.

Participants in Caruaru.

Eduardo Santos (BTPE President) and Cecília Lemos (BTPE Vice President), during the event in Recife/PE.

BRAZ-TESOL Goiânia

Andressa Cardoso, president of BRAZ-TESOL Goiânia, tells us all about their event last May.

"The last BRAZ-TESOL Goiânia Chapter, English Language Matters, was held at Cultura Inglesa on May 15th. The event was fine-tuned to provoke the ELT community to reflect about the interconnected world and on the attitudes and attributes that may have been left aside on the way and put them back on the table with a great lineup of presenters."

Higor Cavalcante, 2nd BRAZ-TESOL Vice President, pleased the participants with a very thought-provoking plenary about the importance of language development for NNESTs (Non-Native English Speaking Teachers).

The event was organized in a way that participants were able to take part in two workshops besides the plenary session, which turned out to be a huge success.

The workshops were conducted by Ana Maria Menezes, Ilá Coimbra, Karla Picceli, Lucas Rigonato, Ricardo César, Hulgo Freitas and Gustavo Granado.

The raffle was conducted at the end with the support of our sponsors: Macmillan, SBS and Oxford. There were also some gifts from ITDI, Connect Me Education and Cambridge.

Rodrigo Santana, a senior BRAZ-TESOL member, referred to this seminar as a "unique opportunity to update our knowledge on relevant issues in a friendly environment with very inspiring presenters."

lighting

BRAZ-TESOL Brasília

A few words by Graeme Hodgson, BRAZ-TESOL Brasília Chapter secretary, on their very successful event, which also took place last May.

"On 8th May, the Brasilia Chapter held an evening event with an innovative format at Casa Thomas Jefferson in Asa Norte. After a well-attended Happy Hour with publishers' stands and a chance to catch up with friends and colleagues over a glass of wine and snacks, a Round Table Discussion on the topic of Brain-Friendly ELT was held. Panelists included Mr. Guilherme Pacheco (from Cultura Inglesa Rio), who spoke about the Emotional brain from his point of view as an experienced teacher, trainer and, more recently, psychotherapist.

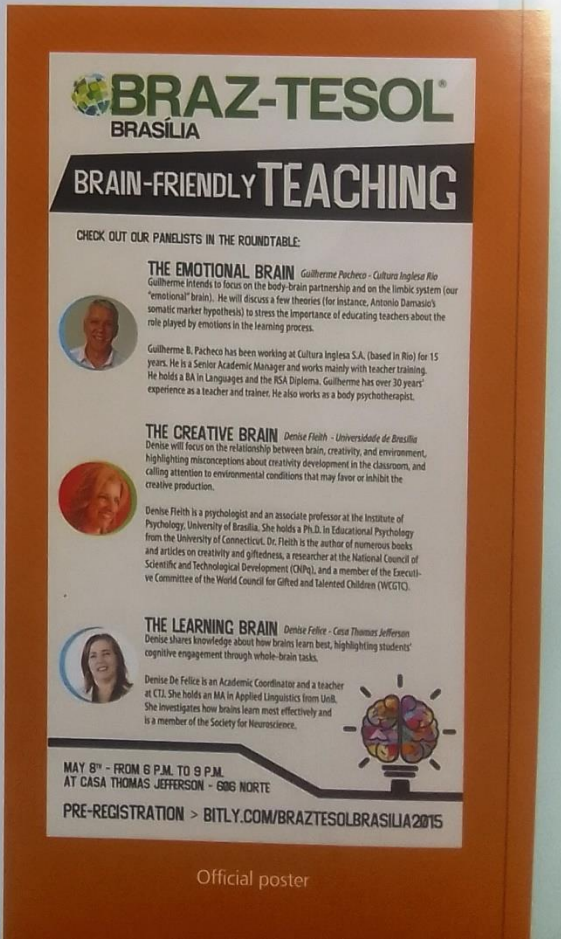
Then it was the turn of Dr. Denise Fleith (UnB), who described the creative brain and the importance of stimulating creativity, not as something innate which one either has or has not, but rather as a skill that EFL teachers can develop amongst students as language learners.

The third and final talk in the Round Table was given by a teacher from the host institution itself, Denise Felice, who involved the audience in understanding how we learn through the establishment of neural networks, with firing of neurons and synaptic connections taking place throughout the learning-thinking process.

Still in keeping with the innovative format adopted for this event, it was then the turn of six volunteers from Cultura Inglesa and Casa Thomas Jefferson, who gave rotating 10-minute demo sessions highlighting activities that they had found best engaged students' brains in the classroom. In total, over 120 teachers attended this Friday-evening event and all agreed that there was plenty of food for thought, not to mention all the fun and learning that took place."

Graeme Hodson with presenter Guilherme Pacheco.

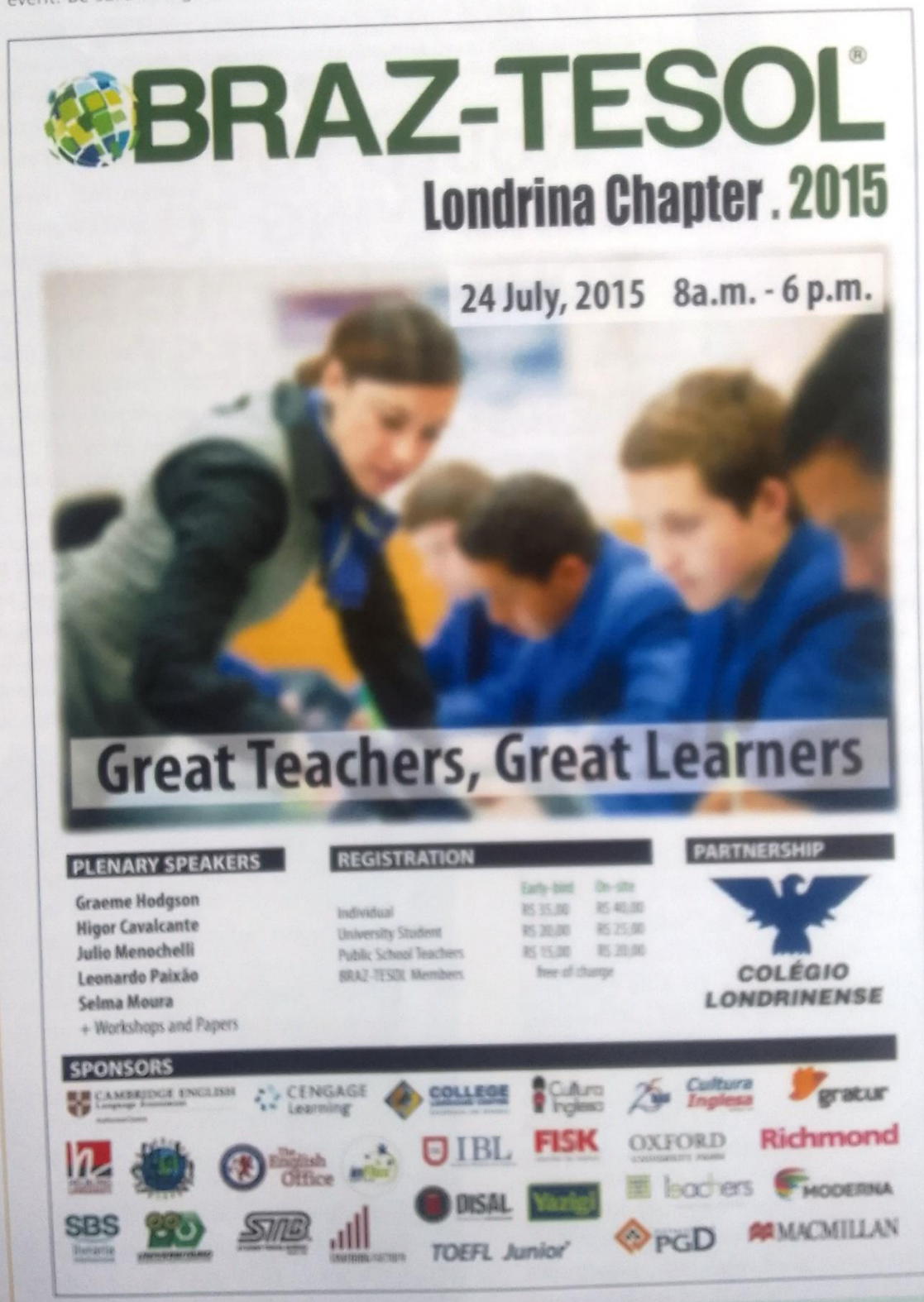
The three panelists: Guilherme Pacheco, Denise Fleith e Denise Felice.


BRAZ-TESOL
BRASÍLIA
BRAIN-FRIENDLY TEACHING
CHECK OUT OUR PANELISTS IN THE ROUNDTABLE:
THE EMOTIONAL BRAIN Guilherme Pacheco - Cultura Inglesa Rio
Guilherme intends to focus on the body-brain partnership and on the limbic system (our "emotional" brain). He will discuss a few theories (for instance, Antonio Damasio's somatic marker hypothesis) to stress the importance of educating teachers about the role played by emotions in the learning process.
Guilherme B. Pacheco has been working at Cultura Inglesa S.A. (based in Rio) for 15 years. He is a Senior Academic Manager and works mainly with teacher training. He holds a BA in Languages and the RSA Diploma. Guilherme has over 30 years' experience as a teacher and trainer. He also works as a body psychotherapist.
THE CREATIVE BRAIN Denise Fleith - Universidade de Brasília
Denise will focus on the relationship between brain, creativity, and environment, highlighting misconceptions about creativity development in the classroom, and calling attention to environmental conditions that may favor or inhibit the creative production.
Denise Fleith is a psychologist and an associate professor at the Institute of Psychology, University of Brasília. She holds a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Connecticut. Dr. Fleith is the author of numerous books and articles on creativity and giftedness, a researcher at the National Council of Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), and a member of the Executive Committee of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (WCGTC).
THE LEARNING BRAIN Denise Felice - Casa Thomas Jefferson
Denise shares knowledge about how brains learn best, highlighting students' cognitive engagement through whole-brain tasks.
Denise De Felice is an Academic Coordinator and a teacher at CTI. She holds an MA in Applied Linguistics from UnB. She investigates how brains learn most effectively and is a member of the Society for Neuroscience.
MAY 8TH - FROM 6 P.M. TO 9 P.M.
AT CASA THOMAS JEFFERSON - 608 NORTE
PRE-REGISTRATION > BITLY.COM/BRAZTESOLBRASILIA2015

Official poster

BRAZ-TESOL Londrina

Our Londrina chapter will also be holding another riveting event for the local ELT community on July 24, 2015. The chapter president, Konrad Ludwig, has kindly sent us the official poster of the upcoming event. Be sure to register if you're in or around Londrina next July!



Ilá Coimbra

Ilá Coimbra has been a teacher for over 12 years. After obtaining her degree in Languages from the Universidade de São Paulo, she lived in Ireland, where she prepared both for her Cambridge English CAE & CPE, which she obtained in 2011. She currently teaches adults, specially preparing them for exams such as IELTS and CAE, and she is also a teacher trainer at Seven Idiomas in São Paulo. As part of her professional development, Ilá has obtained the CELTA and ICELT certificates, and she is considering taking a TESOL Diploma in 2016.

"WOULD YOU MIND LYING TO YOUR STUDENTS?": A NNEST X NEST PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Discrimination against non-native English-speaker teachers (NNESTs) in the TEFL scenario has been widely discussed lately, and many heated arguments have taken place in different social media, teaching conferences, and even in unorthodox discussion channels (such as pubs and bars). One of the many points raised is how much of the demand for a native English speaker teacher (NEST) comes from the institution itself and how much of it comes from students of English.

In order to contribute to the issue and to save money with therapy, I would like to tell a sad personal anecdote: the year was 2011 and I was trying to get a summer camp teaching position in a renowned school in an English-speaking country. I'm sorry if you were expecting juicy details here about the parts involved, but I am going to keep it professional and be a little evasive about that.

Just like any other applicant, I took part in the whole selection process: CV analysis, Skype interview, traveling availability, etc, and I was absolutely ecstatic to hear from the DOS herself that I was suitable for the position. Nonetheless, at that point of the process, I was made an unusual, if not bizarre, request: She asked me if I would mind lying to the students by telling them that although I was Brazilian, I had been raised and also lived in the US. Although I was taken aback by that, I confess I ended up agreeing with that 'white lie', especially because I was eager to get the job. To satisfy your curiosity (at least regarding the outcomes of that awkward situation), the course unfortunately ended up being cancelled due to the low number of students registered, and I fortunately didn't have to lie.

Four years have gone by and that request still lingers in my mind, making me wonder why they asked me to lie like that. The first thing that occurs to me is that students would feel disappointed, maybe even angry, if they didn't have a native speaker as a teacher; after all, they are going to an English-speaking country, and therefore a NEST would probably be what they expect. But what is really behind that expectation? Is it real or it is just taken for granted that students prefer NESTs? How much is the institution exaggerating that preference? What about us, NNESTs: How much are we contributing to change this situation?

First of all, I would like to reflect upon what that request says about the attitude of language intuitions towards the issue of NESTs x NNESTs. I cannot say that this particular institute has preferences for NESTs since

I would have been hired had the course not been cancelled. Nevertheless, they do not try to change the students' mind. On the contrary, they just found an easy solution to try and please both sides – students, by offering them a 'nearly native teacher'; and the TEFL community, by hiring a NNEST to teach in an English-speaking country. It goes without saying that the TEFL community is not pleased (and should not be indeed) with this kind of attitude, which does not contribute to the debate about equality in the field.

In his article "Get involved", published on the TEFL Equity Advocates blog, James Taylor lists some actions that employers and institutions can take to start changing students' mind. He says, "Speak to your students. You might claim that they only want NESTs, but what is this based on? What I've found is that they aren't really that fussed and that they know the truth, which is that the only thing they need is a great teacher". The school might have taken for granted that the students going for their program were expecting a NEST, but were they really? Immersion is much more than just having English lessons with a NEST; it is about living the culture and experiencing the language on a daily basis outside the classroom. Would they be that offended, then, by having a NNEST as a teacher? This will unfortunately never be known.

However, the less we develop ourselves as competent teachers and especially as proficient speakers, the more the myth of NESTs being better teachers will perpetuate.

What about the role that we, NNESTs, play in this scenario? We all know that it is not difficult to find students who have had bad experiences with teachers, be they NESTs or NNESTs, and what they really look for in a teacher is simply good teaching. However, most students might think that a NEST is more knowledgeable as far as language is concerned and feel that a NEST will provide them with better input and more effective error correction than a NNEST. Although it is true that there's a great amount of teachers out there who have serious language issues and, much as I hate to admit it, a big part of those are NNESTs, a well-prepared and experienced NNEST should be perfectly capable of catering to any student's needs.

If we think of the Brazilian context, I believe that, on average, the general level of our English teacher is B2, which is far from being enough to provide the high-quality input students expect. I am completely aware that this is a much more complex problem that involves our old-fashioned and severely defective educational system, our extremely low salaries and the poor working conditions offered by most language schools. All these factors just contribute for the English professionals being demotivated to seek professional development. However, the less we develop ourselves as competent teachers and especially as proficient speakers, the more the myth of NESTs being better teachers will perpetuate. The biggest contribution we, NNESTs, can give to change the scenario is simply to be the best teacher we can be, which means striving for excellence in all realms of our profession, pedagogy and language-wise.

The lesson I took from all the reflections made here and throughout the years is that although some renowned and respectable institutions might have, to some extent, overcome their prejudice against NNESTs, they are still doing very little to make a real difference. Nonetheless, it is also of major importance that we, teachers of all nationalities, seek linguistic and pedagogical excellence and fight for that to be the only criterion adopted by institutions at home and abroad when hiring an English teacher.

Source:

http://teflequityadvocates.com/2014/06/08/get-involved-by-james-taylor/

ARTICLE 2

Cintia Rodrigues

Cintia Rodrigues has an MA in Applied Linguistics (TEFL). She has been teaching English for 12 years and currently works as a Pedagogical Coordinator and a teacher at Seven Idiomas and at Caltabiano Idiomas.

OMG! THERE IS A NATIVE SPEAKER IN THE ROOM!

Have you ever been lost for words simply because there was a native speaker in front of you? Doesn't it feel like everything you have studied so far, that all the effort you have made to master this language simply vanishes into air? It has happened to me numerous times.

Differently from most of the articles that discuss native English-speaker teachers (NESTs) vs non-native English-speaker teachers (NNESTs), I am not going to highlight the differences in teaching behaviour or the fact that some language centres prefer inexperienced NESTs to experienced NNESTs. In this article, instead, I want to discuss the root of NNESTs' fear to speak out in public and suggest possible ways to overcome it.

Before we get started, I would like you to answer two questions:

Why is it so hard for us, NNESTs, to speak with our colleagues in English?

Why is it so terrifying for us, NNESTs, to open our mouth around native English-speakers?

I believe each one of us have our own reasons, but there is one thing we share: lack of confidence. How good do you think your English skills are?

Once, at a BRAZ-TESOL convention, Jeremy Harmer approached me and asked my opinion on a workshop we had both attended. I was not able to utter a word for a few seconds. Lots of things were going on in my mind, among them were: "OMG, J.H. is talking to me.", "OMG, do I know enough to give THIS guy an opinion?", "OMG, he is going to laugh at my English, at my British mixed with Brazilian accent. OMG, I'd better not say anything". In the meantime, there he was, smiling at me and telling me about the importance of teacher professional development.

Why is it so terrifying for us, NNESTs, to open our mouth around native English-speakers?

I believe each one of us have our own reasons, but there is one thing we share: lack of confidence.

The fact that it was Jeremy Harmer partially justifies my reaction. However, during the same convention, I noticed that the same would happen every time I was near an English person. It probably happened because I had just returned to Brazil after having lived in a small English town for one and a half year. Honestly speaking, I was afraid of their laughing at my British accent although I knew it was not that bad.

According to Medgyes, while a non-native English-speaker is usually proud of his/her non-nativeness, a NNEST tends to feel insecure about their performance, despite their level of proficiency. This is probably because English is their working tool, and it is not easy to accept that you teach something you will never be able to master thoroughly. Besides, you know that people expect great things from you. Everyone, including yourself, expects you to have a wide and varied vocabulary; to know, understand and use perfect and complex grammar; and to have the perfect and most beautiful British/American accent.

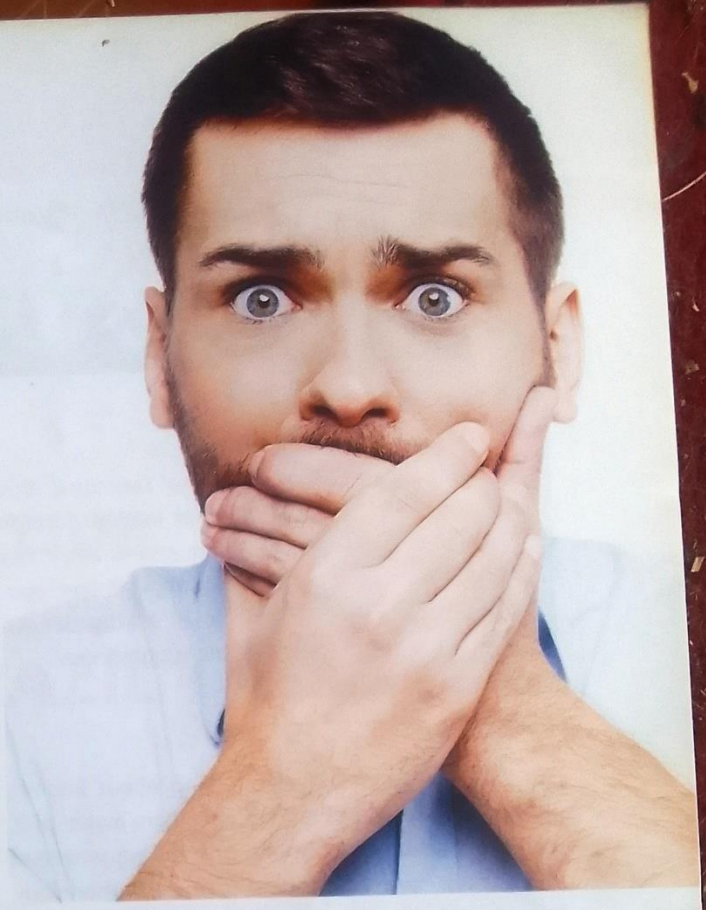
This expectation is scary.

Things get even worse when your boss or a colleague talks you into presenting a workshop. Fear and anxiety are feelings we all share before delivering a workshop. It doesn't matter who you are, where you are, the context, or the subject to be approached, sharing our knowledge in any environment is always challenging.

The first question that pops into our minds while we are organising the workshop room is, "What if there is an expert in the audience?" Once I had the pleasure of having the author of the book I had chosen as reference in the audience. Needless to say, I freaked out. I immediately saw every single bit of my confidence going down the drain. I started stuttering. I felt like running away from that room. Those were some of the most dreadful seconds of my life. Putting myself together was not easy, but after realising I had the grip on the topic, the stuttering stopped and I the presentation went as smoothly as it could possibly go.

What happened to me there could have happened to any NNESTs or NESTs. However, there is one fear that every single NNEST faces in these occasions: making English mistakes in front of an audience packed with English teachers. We fear the NNESTs, but we are terrified of the NESTs, or native speakers in general.

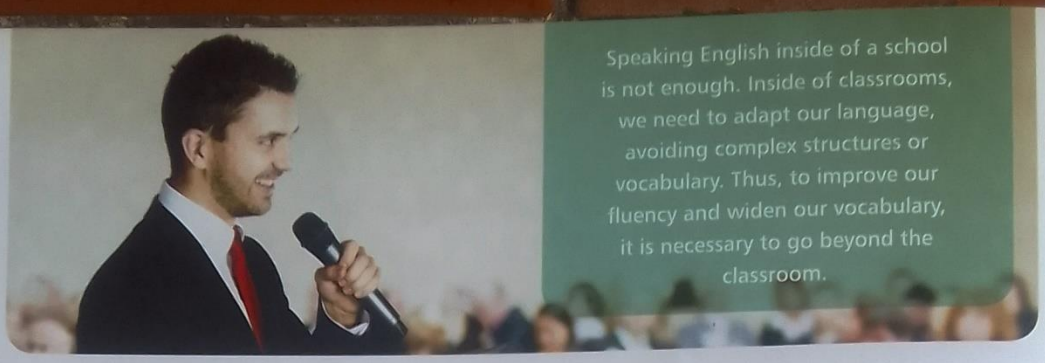
We, NNESTs, know that we judge other professionals based on their subject knowledge, as well as on



their use of the language. The speaker might come up with amazing ideas, but if their pronunciation, choice of words, and grammar do not reach our often unrealistic standards, we tend to disregard their work (which is usually a huge mistake). Nevertheless, if there are only NNESTs in the room, we know we are sharing a room with English learners; therefore, some mistakes might go unnoticed, or be excused. We know that we all have an accent, that we all have transfer problems.

A native speaker, on the other hand, is able to notice every single mistake we make. A native speaker is the only one truly able to recognise the production of full vowels, instead of the weak forms. They are the ones that will notice every single preposition mistake we make, and you are going to make at least one or two of them.

The solution for this problem seems easy, then. Do not deliver workshops. Following this line, do not even think about teaching courses for teachers, as there will surely be native speakers and non-native speakers ready and open to have you as their role model. Do you not like this solution? Me neither.



Speaking English inside of a school is not enough. Inside of classrooms, we need to adapt our language, avoiding complex structures or vocabulary. Thus, to improve our fluency and widen our vocabulary, it is necessary to go beyond the classroom.

Building confidence is the key to overcome this fear. However, in this field, it is not enough to look at yourself in front of the mirror and chant, "You are good. Your English is good. They will love you. Everybody loves you". The hole is a little deeper. Therefore, here go 3 more realistic suggestions:

1. Be realistic.

No, you will never know everything about English. Studying is part of our job and if you are aware of it, you won't be afraid of asking or checking whenever you are not sure of a certain feature of phonology, lexis, or syntax.

What's more, once you know your limitations, you learn strategies to overcome them, and your anxiety level drops. A less anxious teacher is able to set realistic goals to lower his/her students' anxiety, as well as to help them to build strategies to overcome their weaknesses.

2. Do not stop studying.

We often tell our students to push their boundaries, to read, listen, work on grammar, take notes of new words, but most NNESTs do not do the same. I have heard many teachers say that they are afraid of taking the CPE exam, I have heard some teachers say that it is very hard to understand songs in English. I have also heard, surprisingly, that reading books in English or watching series without subtitles is very difficult.

Firstly, I have to agree with these teachers, those things are very difficult, indeed. What strikes me as important, though, is the fact that if these teachers are not pushing their own boundaries, they will not be able to teach their learners the strategies they need to push theirs.

There are several courses aimed at teachers in the market. To put it another way, there are many opportunities out there to improve your English and become a more confident English speaker, as well as a better English teacher. If this is the career path you have chosen, invest. There will always be something new to learn.

3. Speak in English.

Choose a friend to speak in English with. Make friends with native speakers. Spend some time abroad. If you travel to the UK, for instance, make sure you will talk to English people. Talk to yourself. We have given each one of the tips above to our students. Hardly ever do we do those things, though.

Speaking English inside of a school is not enough. Inside of classrooms, we need to adapt our language, avoiding complex structures or vocabulary. Thus, to improve our fluency and widen our vocabulary, it is necessary to go beyond the classroom.

Keep in mind, however, that it is not easy in the beginning. You will not find all the words you need to discuss a certain topic. You will not know the meaning of all of the expressions the person you are speaking with use. You might not be able to talk about gardening. On the other hand, you might get surprised with the amount of words you already know, with the expressions you are able to use, as well as the strategies you have to go around any topic.

To close, next time you are in front of a native speaker, do not be afraid of them. Use them, instead. Remember that mastering a second language is a life-long process. You will never know everything, but your English today is better than it was yesterday and definitely worse than it will be tomorrow.

Be realistic, never ever stop studying, find your English voice.

Thiago Veigga

Thiago Veigga has been in the ELT industry for over 10 years and is the co-founder and coordinator of Estude Inglês. He has a degree in Languages, a post-graduate degree in Media-Education and is currently working on his Masters with the University of Leicester.

THE NATIVE SPEAKER FALLACY IN BRAZIL

As someone whose job is to design one-to-one courses and select teachers according to students' needs and profiles, a common request I get from learners is a native English speaker teacher. In a recent survey carried out in Brazil by the British Council (2014), students who plan to start studying English answered about important attributes for an English teacher. The results show that it was more important to have a teacher who has lived abroad or who is from another country (12% of respondents) than a teacher who has a graduate or a postgraduate degree (10% of respondents). I suspect that the number would be even higher if we had the words 'native speaker' in the options.

Then the supervisor said: 'we really like you, but students prefer native speakers and we had many this time'. This was the first of many times I was discriminated against.

This takes me back to when I was taking part in a selection process for a language school. I was only 20 years old at the time and was in my third year of my Languages degree. I had become friends with this guy that I will refer to as John. We were the same age. He lived two blocks away from me and I helped him with his lesson plans. John had never taught English before, I had some experience. I was surprised to know that my new friend and other native English speaker teachers had gotten the job and I had not. When I was given feedback, they praised my lessons and attitude, which seemed a bit awkward, as I had not been chosen. Then the supervisor said: 'we really like you, but students prefer native speakers and we had many this time'. This was the first of many times I was discriminated against.

In Brazil's EFL context, non-native English speaker teachers (NNESTs) still numerically predominate over native speakers of English (NESTs), possibly due to issues related to visas and work permits. Although there is a higher number of NNESTs, NESTs seem to have an advantage. Learning and teaching a foreign language have been associated with the dichotomy between native and non-native speakers (Davies, 1991). Native speakers have tended to be regarded as the model, with high level of credibility.

Why do some students and employers in Brazil think that being a native speaker of the language has more value than formal education and even experience? This can be explained by the concept of native-speakerism. According to Holliday (2005), native-speakerism is 'an ideology within ELT characterized by the belief that native speaker teachers represent ideas of both English language and English language teaching methodology'.

If a significant part of the ELT industry seems to revolve around the idea of the native speaker, it is fair that we attempt to define it. According to Love & Ansaldo (2010), a native speaker is someone who was born and brought up from birth to speak a given language, preferably surrounded by adults who had the same experience with the same language.

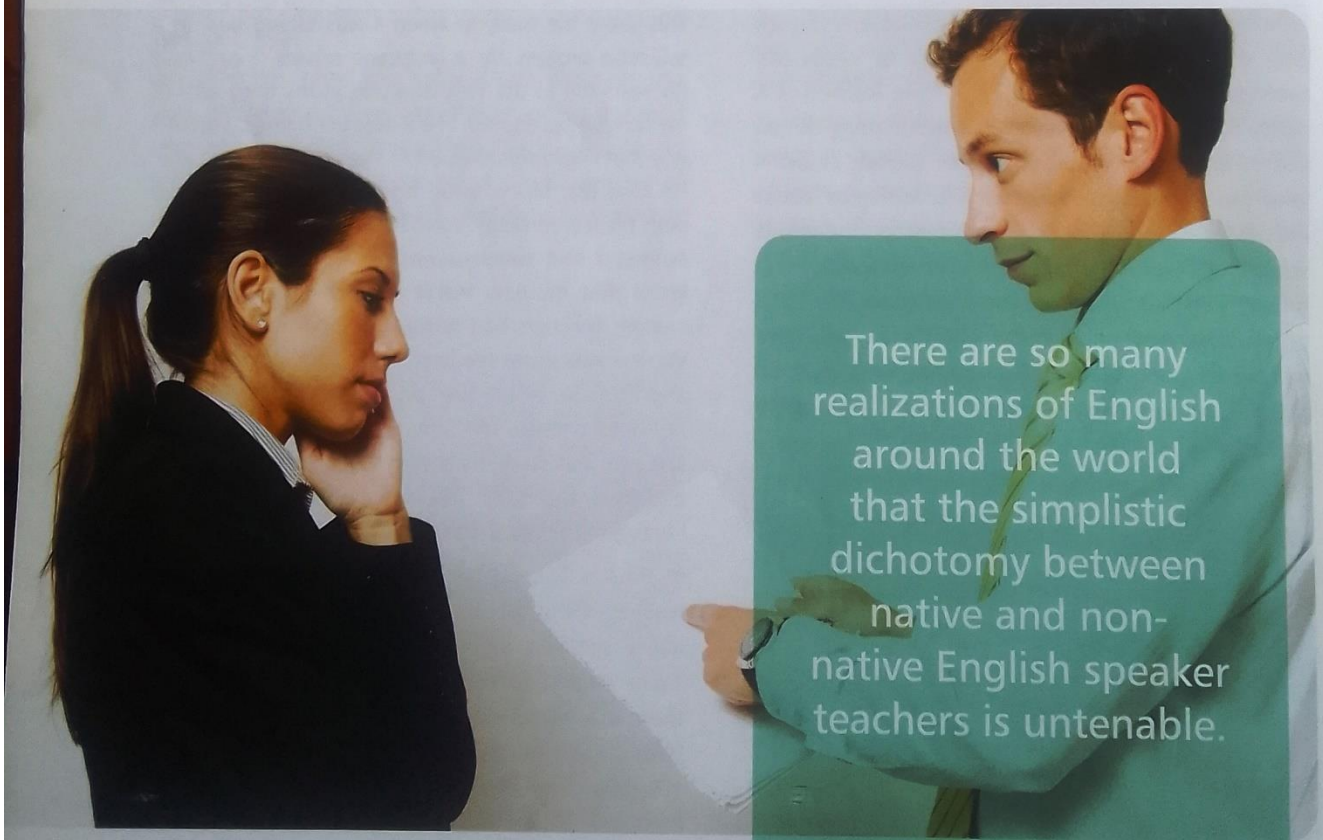
Native speaker of what variety?

It is not possible to account for all the variables involved in what 'native' is.

There are so many realizations of English around the world that the simplistic dichotomy between native and non-native English speaker teachers is untenable. Is this idealized person a speaker of British English? If so, where is she/he from in Britain? What about social variations? A working class speaker might not speak the same way the Queen of England does. Is the Queen's English the goal at all times?

If someone was born and raised in Ireland, but never had access to formal education, this person is still a native speaker. Hopefully many would agree that only that would not qualify them to teach.

Native and non-native are, on linguistic grounds, unviable terms. According to Davies (2003), when judgments are elicited about people or about their language, what is obtained is some view of themselves; all sociolinguistic judgments are identity ones. The question is whether native and non-native speakers make the same judgments about language use.



There are so many realizations of English around the world that the simplistic dichotomy between native and non-native English speaker teachers is untenable.

Any teacher should be able to, in case they do not know a certain piece of vocabulary, prepare their lessons in advance or look up words during or after a lesson. If a word or an expression is not listed in good dictionaries and is too specific for certain contexts, we need to seriously question its relevance.

Students prefer native speakers

At least in Brazil, this is true to some extent for those who wish to commence their studies. It is important to point out that in the same British Council survey (2014) students demonstrated a preference for teachers who have lived or are from abroad, 13% of respondents said that it is important that the teacher has a degree or a postgraduate degree. We may infer from this result that students who are more involved with language learning develop a more critical sense of teaching qualifications. Perhaps these students have had experiences with better-prepared teachers and were better able to judge the result of qualifications versus living/being from abroad.

There is also an ethical issue that should be addressed. Just because there is a demand from a part of the market, that does not mean the demand should dictate the rules. If students demonstrate a 'preference' for white middle-class natives, does that mean everyone who does not fit the mold would have to be potentially unemployed? At what point can employers decide they can no longer pander?

What is often behind the claim that NESTs are preferred is simply racism. An example of how racism produces assumptions about one's language proficiency was when Rubin (1992) used a matched-guise test to investigate the relation between racial images and listening comprehension. The study showed that the Caucasian face was perceived as superior to the Asian face.

Vocabulary

Another fundamental misconception is that learners need native speakers to learn vocabulary such as idioms and slang. Any teacher should be able to, in case they do not know a certain piece of vocabulary, prepare their lessons in advance or look up words during or after a lesson. If a word or an expression is not listed in good dictionaries and is too specific for certain contexts, we need to seriously question its relevance.

English is now a global language and is considered a Lingua Franca. Evidence from corpus-based studies show that idiomatic language is not predominant in English as a Lingua Franca interactions.

To conclude

Taking everything into account, arguments that justify discriminatory practices against NNESTs at closer scrutiny are not empirically substantiated. Holiday (2014) explains that these 'native' and 'non-native' labels represent neo-racist ideas about superior and inferior cultures of learning and teaching and therefore these concepts should be irrelevant.

Change starts with teaching associations, recruiters, NESTs and NNESTs that know passports should not be considered qualifications and consequently, not interfere in recruitment and hiring processes.

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ARTICLE 4

SIG CORNER - LAM SIG

BRAZ-TESOL LAM SIG (Leadership and Management Special Interest Group) - left to right: Rafael Reis, Marcelo Dalpino, Christina Riego, Bruna Caltabiano and Sérgio Monteiro.

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ASSESSING QUALITY AND MEASURING RESULTS

Leadership and Management SIG aims at:

- **Raising awareness and contributing to the development of good management practices within ELT**
- **Providing opportunities for discussion, as well as courses and events concerning management issues**
- **Helping improve quality standards in ELT**

Education in general is a very difficult topic to be discussed because everyone has a really strong opinion about it. Teachers, parents, students, school administrators and educators have strong beliefs concerning what education should be, how it should be conducted and who should be responsible for such actions. In this sense, we could all recognize that it is a complex area to work on, but society and governments have been interested in it due to globalization and the effects it has on education.

Fortunately, we live in a world that is always seeking improvement. Companies look for processes and human resources in order to achieve the best results and we should ask ourselves why not do the same when it comes to education.

One alternative educators have found to keep up with globalization and market trends is by assessing

Fortunately, we live in a world that is always seeking improvement. Companies look for processes and human resources in order to achieve the best results and we should ask ourselves why not do the same when it comes to education.

education and learning. According to Rowe & Lievesley (2012), "Education systems have been changing to improve the quality of education by means of using Performance Indicators." *Performance indicators* (PIs) can be defined as *data or information by which the quality of institutions may be measured and evaluated.* They also provide evidential parameters for determining the extent of goals and objectives.

By using performance indicators, we are able to ensure the quality of services we are offering our customers. On the other hand, one might argue that it is virtually impossible to assess education, because it is such a complex area in which to measure results – there are some characteristics of our service which make it difficult, such as:

Intangibility: it seems to be difficult to provide tangible evidence of service provision (teaching & learning).

Inseparability: there is simultaneous production and consumption of the service. Also, the consumption generally takes place in the presence of other consumers which causes the service to be dependent not only on the service itself, but also on other consumers.

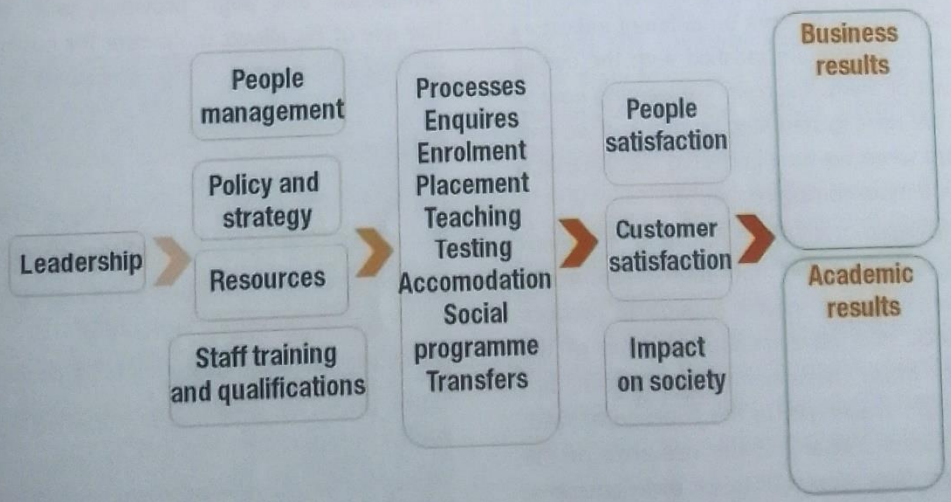
Variability: standardization seems difficult because of heterogeneity.

However, schools and institutions all over the world have proven otherwise. When it comes to school improvement, it is easy to find literature and case studies of institutions that have put performance indicators to the test and the result is no magic, it simply works.

Institutions are usually concerned about two kinds of results, business and academic. Every school or institution wants to achieve financial and academic success and the best way they have found to do so is by checking the indicators against what has been found in previous years. By doing that systematically, the institution is sure of the results and changes that took place and may even draw some conclusions on how it all happened. If they also write a business plan, they are able to change, adapt and reflect on strategies for future plans.

In the chart below, you will find examples concerning the processes that lead to academic and business results. By identifying each of the topics below inside the institutions, educators should be able to have a broader view of what is happening in each area and make changes accordingly in order to reach better results.

Quality as an attribute to the entire system:



(Pickering, 1999 in Ron & al, 2008)

Once the student has started studying at a school, the director/coordinator needs to monitor their satisfaction and align provision with expectation. The use of PIs allows us to care for customers, both external and internal, bringing the best results.

As aforementioned, PIs should be aiming at both academic and business results, providing the manager with some kind of guidance in the strategic decision-making process, in a way the administrator is able to assess each indicator and for that reason shouldn't be done all at once. Understanding the indicators goes beyond reading the numbers, it implies considering the big scenario, reflecting upon the cause-effect relation of actions, relating results and generating improvement and professional development.

An important guiding principle is that PI data **should not** be collected for their own sake, but rather because they are needed for specific policy purposes. For instance, if a private language school would like to improve its business results, it might start by assessing their customer satisfaction and from that point on design a plan to improve this element only. By doing that systematically over the years, the school will have a record of data and it will be easy to draw conclusions, plan better strategies and think of all kinds of ideas in order to assess that indicator. From that point on, the school can choose to work on different indicators until the administrators are satisfied with the overall results of each of them. It is really like learning how to ride a bike: We have to start step by step and we only move forward when we have perfected the skill that is necessary for a more complex move.

According to Fullan (2014), "...creating a general inspiring vision and instilling motivation in teachers to join the cause were not specific enough to produce **actual results**." We have mentioned some of the characteristics which make our service difficult, but one of our main challenges, in the educational field, is to make teachers aware of the relevance of the indicators and their applicability in their outcome. That is why it is so fundamental to have a set of PIs that ensures relevance, validity, cost-effectiveness and result-orientation. It is possible to consider several indicators in the educational field; in the chart below, some possible PIs that can be part of a school business strategy are listed. The decision of which one to consider is based on the institution's vision, mission and values, and orientation to results. The whole team has to be aligned in terms of knowing the indicators, understanding their relevance, measuring progress and establishing strategic actions. PIs are not a matter of control, but a matter of having right maps that will help you see beyond and define a path to follow.

Find below some of the most common PIs used in schools and the impact on results:

INDICATOR	IMPACT ON RESULTS
Students' satisfaction with teacher	High risk of drop-outs
Students in debt	High risk of drop-outs
Absenteeism	High risk of drops-outs
Class observation	Quality of instruction
Use of course material/online tool	Quality of instruction
Students' progress/results	Quality of instruction
Class size/number of students per class	Profitability
Teachers' retention	Profitability
Re-enrolment	Profitability

Once the student has started studying at a school, the director/coordinator needs to monitor their satisfaction and align provision with expectation. The use of PIs allows us to care for customers, both external and internal, bringing the best results.

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Divya Madhavan

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PASSPORT CONTROL

When I was invited to contribute to this issue, I felt a moment's hesitation — should I write about Critical Pedagogy to a readership who live and breathe Paulo Freire's culture and environment so much more closely than I do? Will my translated understanding of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* stand up to those who hold the original Brazilian Portuguese version dear?

Of course I should. And of course it will. I didn't hesitate for too long though because I think it's precisely the universal nature of these ideas that allow them to transcend and blur barriers. And any conversation on the human condition should be stripped of such barriers.

As English language teachers, we are in the business of managing barriers. The world of English language teaching, learning, assessing and policy-making hosts environments propelled by power and access. Today, few people learn English for the intellectual stimulation and personal growth of learning another language. People learn English because it's English, the passport to an internationally-validated identity.

In this opinion piece, I'd like to address our role in managing these ebbs and flows of power in English language learning environments, through the specific notion of critical pedagogy and through the measured

(I have written this assuming the reader has some familiarity with the notion of critical pedagogy, and thus bypass some necessary definitions on what it is, how it is expressed and what it means for a classroom. If you wish to read more about this, there are three useful posts about it on my blog (www.divyamadhavan.com): Cultural Capital; The Hidden Curriculum; and The Banking Model.)

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rejection of sterile lesson content that leaves the social dynamics of language learning aside. I'd like to work with Freire's contrast between critical thinking and naïve thinking, where the latter perceives history as "a stratification of the acquisitions and experiences of the past" (1970:73). I'll argue that history is not a chronological account of what happened before us, history is the story within each of us, and this includes languages — because history is described by language and it is empowered through language.

Passports and frontiers

The spread of the English language has its roots in colonization. It should be possible to talk about this without the hyperbole or hysteria of *'linguistic imperialism'*. The English language spread through colonies and empires and resulted in generations of people like me, who aren't native speakers on paper but don't speak or write in any other language to this level of 'nativism'. I have never identified with the discourse around *'the domination of English over other languages'*. I reject the idea that we continue to somehow be colonised through language because I write in English and, in so doing, I contribute to the growth of the English language. So unless I start writing in French or Arabic and contribute another body of linguistic knowledge, I will remain in the dual position of coloniser and colonised, and this won't get me very far at all.

But despite my self-proclaimed native speaker status in English, I am subject to passport control, ranging from race to accent to cultural knowledge, in a host of environments. I don't perceive this as discriminatory, nor am I accusing anyone in particular. I am just interested in how to manage this in a classroom. How do I represent the English language as someone with little affiliation to any particular English-speaking culture? I am Indian, I grew up in Malaysia, I left for the UK in my late teens, I lived in Austria in my early career and have been a French citizen for longer than any other citizenship I've held. I wear my resulting hybrid accent with pride. And I never know what to do when I'm supposed to teach 'culture' as part of a language syllabus.

To think critically on the status of the English language is to recognise its historical footprint around us and within us and to articulate a clear position on how this footprint is embodied in our social environments. The historical footprint I carry in me is rooted in post-colonial South-East Asia, in a certain reverence for the English language and the old palm oil estates the Britishers left my family to manage. It lies in my grandmother who had very little schooling but an impeccable knowledge of English grammar and discourse and the ability to entertain visiting English expatriates *comme il faut*. It is this unnamed outside force of 'English' culture which we were independent of, yet throughly enamoured by. It was a big part of my

childhood. Yet, it didn't make moving to Britain one day any less of a culture shock, nor did it give me the confidence of a robust cultural identity as an English teacher, because I've never felt authoritative about my relationship to the English language. It did, however, create in me the everyday magic of adaptation, which so many of us who actively question our cultural identities have.

What does it mean to teach English?

In the first five minutes of my first teaching job, I was introduced to a classroom full of Austrian teenagers as having "a perfect British accent". As I launched into the reading of a textbook paragraph out loud, I found myself disturbed by such a curious introduction but soon realised the need for validating my presence in the classroom, as the new language assistant. I now manage the language assistants at my university and part of my role is to give them workshops on pedagogy, classroom management and adapting scientific materials for language classes. In working with them I realise again and again how difficult it is to establish and manage authority when it comes to language teaching, because of how inseparable it is to culture. And some cultures are, and perhaps always will be, more powerful than others.

A few years ago when I used to examine for Cambridge ESOL, a colleague one day said to me "don't you find working for Cambridge better than working for other exam boards? It always sounds so much more important when you say 'I examine for Cambridge'". The comment stuck with me because obviously neither of us had ever set foot in the grounds of Cambridge University, nor could we boast any academic affiliation to the institution. We were ESOL language examiners who had viewed a series of training videos to learn the trade and then did an online test to validate our ability to judge test takers according to the required standards. Yet we were perceived with a standard that far exceeded our bounds of validity.

What does it mean to teach English? To me, it is partly to reframe the scope of validity, and consequently to shape beliefs on what is English *is* and what English *will be*, in the world we're all so actively building *today*. It is to contemporise the validity of the language, within our local environment and in celebration of the local environment. Celebrations which are long overdue in many parts of the world, where ethnicity still persists as a criteria for language teaching.

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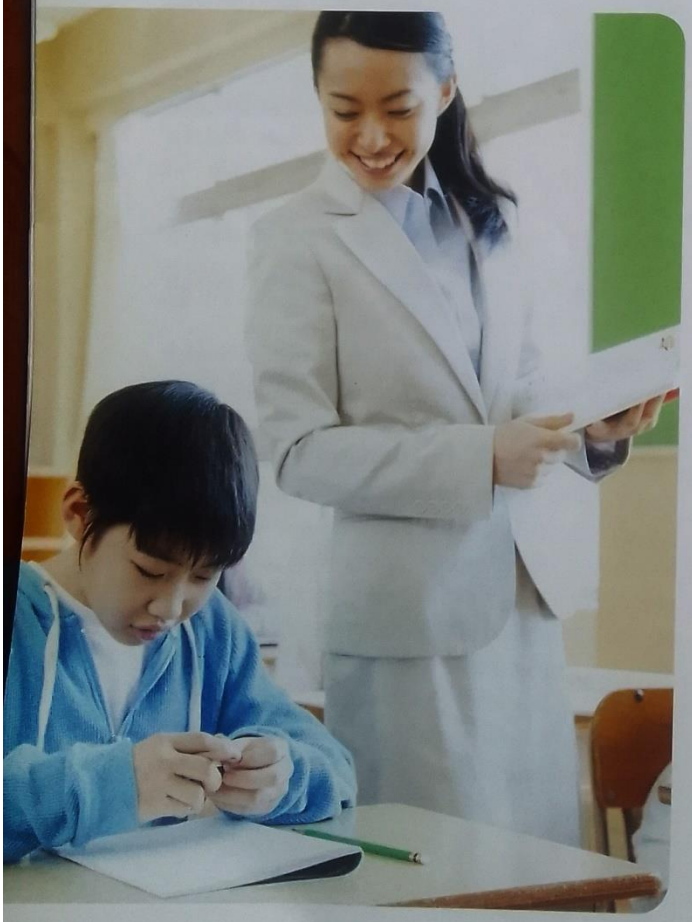
To think critically on the status of the English language in our sphere of teaching, would be to address the set of beliefs regarding English in the part of the world we are teaching it in, and claiming a voice and demanding agency in how this is represented. It would be to address our relationship to what is 'right' and what is 'wrong'. *Dialogue* is one of the most fundamental themes of Pedagogy of the Oppressed, and with the discussion on dialogue, comes *anti-dialogue*, which Freire couches within "the necessity for conquest" (119). There is no argument to win when it comes to shaping our English-speaking cultures of the future.

Dialogue and anti-dialogue in the pedagogical space

Reframing right and wrong with a stronger understanding on complex, local environments is

an act of bravery. I say this because it is an act of claiming authority by making decisions that combine information and intuition. Critical pedagogy isn't only concerned with the reversal of oppressor-oppressed dynamics, it isn't just about the empty-vessel students with knowledge-pouring teachers, it is about dialogue and praxis: bridging the gap between the thinkers and the doers, of reflection and action. "One cannot speak of an *actor*, nor simply of *actors*, but rather *actors in intercommunication*" (110). History surges through society constantly, demanding listening and understanding. Anti-dialogue is when we miss these surges, sterilising cultural identity.

One example of this reframing might be in how we correct pronunciation, and how we set the standard for 'good' English. I believe that a worldwide standard of English pronunciation is not what *will be*, and the harder we cling to RP or Standard American as a yardstick for our students, the slower our work towards fluid and fluent English will be. Another example is in the culture we show in our classrooms. A Greek friend said to me just last week that his son hates learning English because English class is all about Big Ben and The Queen. Another example yet is seizing opportunities to remove what I call 'PARSNIP paralysis'[1], to take the reins and talk about real life in the classroom, to make the students the syllabus. Good classroom content is a context-specific issue, not an international standard. Praxis isn't a two-stage process of reflection followed by action though, "a critical analysis of reality may, however, reveal that a particular form of action is impossible or inappropriate *at the present time*. Those who through reflection perceive the infeasibility or inappropriateness of one or another form of action (which should accordingly be postponed or substituted) cannot thereby be accused of inaction. Critical reflection is also action" (109).



Teaching and consciousness

Good pedagogy is this union of intuition and information. I say information and not knowledge because of the real-time sense it carries. Good pedagogy is, in other words, elastic. It changes with the times, it bends and stretches to accommodate that which surrounds it. The original shape it returns to after stretching in necessary ways is not the clear track of an externally determined syllabus. It is the internal, organic and ever-growing aspects of teacher development, teacher intuition, teacher consciousness. When we teach, we seize. Teaching is a project towards understanding whole environments, where problems are interpreted with depth and solutions are found in journeys of dialogue. It doesn't just raise awareness, it becomes awareness. Conscientização.

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(Translation: Myra Bergman Ramos)

1 PARSNIP is the acronym for politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, isms or pork. This refers to all the topics deemed unsuitable in the context of ELT publishing.

Marek Kiczkowiak

Since graduating with a BA in English and doing the CELTA, Marek has taught English in six countries in a variety of contexts. He's an IELTS examiner and holds Cambridge DELTA. He advocates for equal employment opportunities for non-native English speaking teachers through TEFL Equity Advocates and also blogs about ELT on TEFL Reflections. You can find him on Twitter @marekkiczkowiak and @teflequity. He loves travelling, reading and meeting new people. He's also a keen language learner himself and speaks six languages."

CHALLENGING NATIVE SPEAKERISM IN THE EFL CLASSROOM — SOME PRACTICAL IDEAS

Native Speakerism in ELT

There is little doubt that Native English Speakers (NS) have been and still are the preferred choice of ELT recruiters around the world. Their supposed omniscient linguistic abilities are still treated with great reverence and awe by many students, recruiters and even some ELT professionals, who unwittingly echo Chomsky's (1963) "ideal speaker-hearer" idea. Despite the fact that most linguists (e.g. Paikeday, 1985; Davies, 1991) have since criticised the notion of inherent NS linguistic superiority and infallibility, "native speakerism" (Holliday 2006) — that is, "belief that 'native speakers' represent a 'Western culture' from which spring the ideals both of the language and of language teaching methodology" (Holliday, 2008, p. 49) — still prevails in ELT discourse. In fact, for decades ELT publishers, recruiters and language schools have actively contributed to its spreading by promoting the NS model and ideal. And for many language schools, having a NS is still the unique selling point.

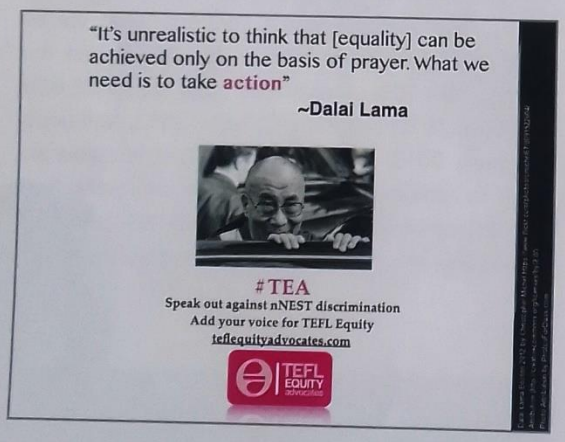
Unsurprisingly, this has led to the current discriminatory nature of ELT recruitment policies. Despite some notable exceptions such as the British Council or International House (which have adopted an egalitarian and inclusive hiring model), advocacy efforts from TESOL International, and the removal of ads for NS only from job listings by TESOL France, MELTA and IATEFL; research confirms what we all see all too often when hunting for ELT jobs on the Internet: over 70% of advertised posts are for NS only (e.g. Selvi, 2010; Lengeling & Pablo, 2012; Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Reucker & Ives, 2014; Kiczkowiak, 2015). In addition, one often gets the impression that the ideal candidate is a young, white NS interested in travelling and exotic countries (Lengeling & Pablo,

There is little doubt that Native English Speakers(NS) have been and still are the preferred choice of ELT recruiters around the world.

2012; Reucker & Ives, 2014), or that teaching English "is not rocket science" (gone2korea.com quoted in Reucker & Ives, 2014, p.12) and therefore, just like in the add below, anyone with genuine interest can apply.

Such hiring policies put into serious doubt the value of professionalism, experience and qualifications. They also marginalise Non-Native English Speakers (NNS), as well as those NS who happen not to have been born in one of the predominantly white "inner circle" English speaking countries (Kachru, 1982); two groups which together form the vast majority of English speaking individuals and among which there are bound to be scores of great ELT professionals.

However, in this article I do not want to vent my frustration at native speakerism ELT is rife with, nor give the impression that the problem of NS favouritism is insurmountable. To the contrary - I am convinced that if we all act together, as English teachers, forgetting about the antagonistic divide artificially imposed on us by the industry; change will come sooner than we could ever imagine. As a result, I would like to suggest practical ways in which we all could and should question native speakerism in the EFL classroom with our learners.


"It's unrealistic to think that [equality] can be achieved only on the basis of prayer. What we need is to take action"
~Dalai Lama
#TEA
Speak out against nNEST discrimination
Add your voice for TEFL Equity
teflequityadvocates.com
TEFL EQUITY advocates

Challenging the market demand

Most recruiters will tell you that they have to only hire NS because this is what the students want. There are studies (e.g. Bannerji, 1991; Butler, 2007; Timmis 2002) which seem to confirm this. However, the question "Do you prefer a NS or a NNS teacher?" posed to a student who typically knows little about learning let alone teaching a language is in my opinion a flawed one as it suggests an unrealistic situation of everything else (e.g. qualifications, experience) being equal. It is quite likely, though by no means a given, that a student will choose a NS if they are not provided with any additional information about the two teachers, nor informed about the possible advantages of having a NNS. This tells us nothing, however, about this student's actual preference.

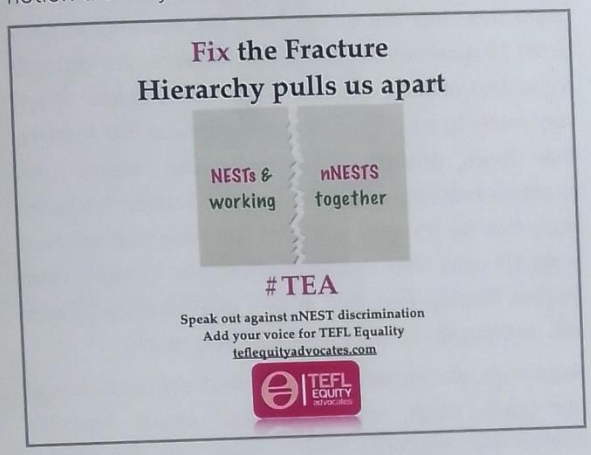
On the other hand, if we were to ask more specific questions, which focus on the teachers' actual skills, we might presumably find out that learners do not want a NS at all costs. For example, "Who would you prefer to be your English teacher:

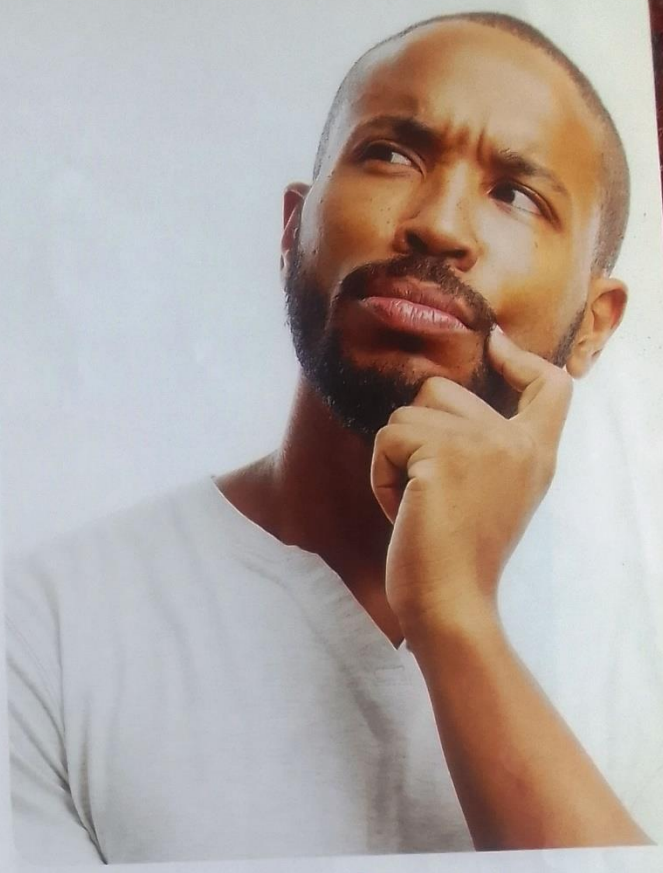
a NS with a 4-week teaching course and 1 year of experience or a NNS with a university degree and 3 years of international experience? Give reasons.

a NS who has never taught IELTS preparation classes or a NNS who is an IELTS examiner and has prepared students for the exam before? (question to a student preparing for IELTS).

It is quite likely, though by no means a given, that a student will choose a NS if they are not provided with any additional information about the two teachers, nor informed about the possible advantages of having a NNS. This tells us nothing, however, about this student's actual preference.

With these two examples I am not trying to suggest that NNS are more experienced or highly qualified than NS, although there are indeed numerous cases when a better suited NNS will be turned down just based on their nationality or mother tongue. What I am getting at is that if we are really concerned about our learners' preferences and ideas about English teachers, we should delve deeper into the nature of things and be prepared to abandon the simplistic notion that any NS is better than any NNS.





First, we could discuss with our students what they actually mean by the concepts of NS and NNS. For example, students could in groups write definitions of the two terms. To prompt them, we could ask them how far they agree or disagree with the following statements (or similar ones):

A NS is somebody born in an English speaking country.

A NS did all their schooling in English.

A NS is somebody only from the UK, the US, Canada or Australia.

Somebody born to English speaking parents but who has never lived in an English speaking country nor went to school there is NOT a NS.

Somebody who passed CPE or has IELTS 8/9 is a NS.

A NS is typically white.

There are no NS in India.

These statements could generate some very interesting and productive discussion, and might prompt learners to revaluate their notion of who a NS is, especially if we ask them to give reasons for their beliefs and encourage an open and honest debate. They also contribute, I think, to broadening their knowledge of the world and of English as a truly global language.

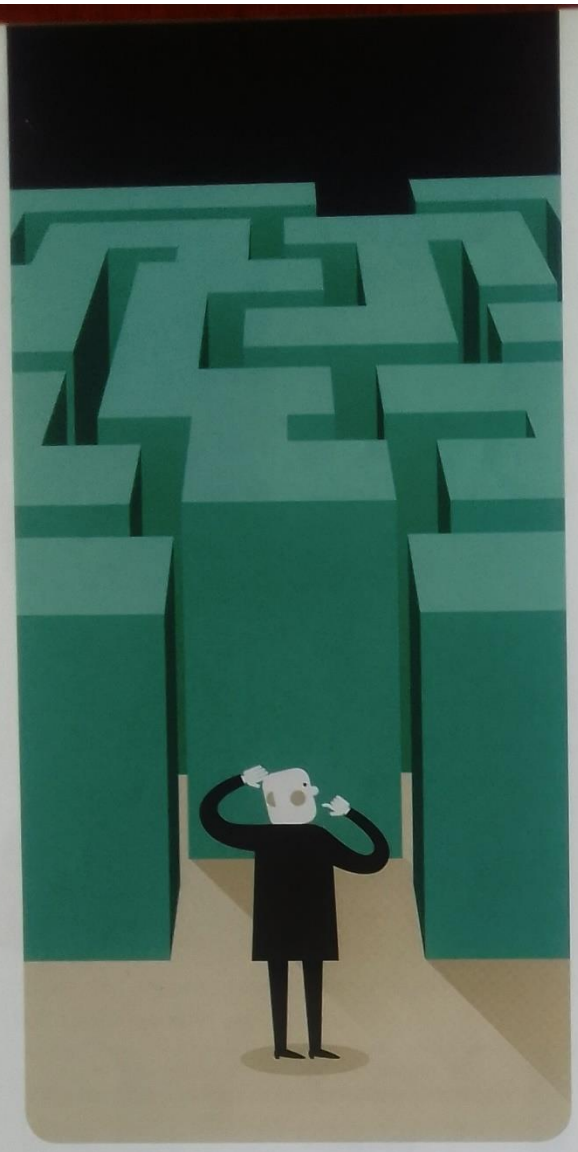
Once we have questioned the simplistic view that a NS is only somebody born in an English speaking country, we can probe the matter further. For example, we could ask learners to complete sentences similar to the ones below:

- Learning English with a NS is … because …
- Learning English with a NNS is … because…
- When I go to a language school, I expect to have classes with an English teacher that is … because…

We can also ask them to discuss these questions:

- Have you ever had classes with a NS/NNS? Did you like them? Why (not)?
- How important is it for you that your teacher is a NS? Would you complain if your teacher was not a NS?
- When choosing a school, is it important for you that the teachers there are NS? Why (not)?

We could also show learners statements about learning and teaching English and ask them to put them into one of four categories: strongly agree,



agree, disagree, strongly disagree; and to give reasons for their choices.

1. I can only learn 'correct' pronunciation from a NS.
2. NNS are better at teaching grammar.
3. NS classes are more interesting.
4. I can learn important things about English culture ONLY from a NS.
5. Speaking English like a NS is not important for me — I just want to communicate.
6. It's helpful to have a teacher that speaks my first language.

All of the above are just examples and should be adapted to the learners' context and language level. However, they do, I think, offer students some serious food for thought about their beliefs about teaching and learning languages and could generate a very interesting discussion.

Finally, we might want to discuss what qualities our students actually value in NS, NNS and good English teachers in general. To do this, we could divide the class into two groups, A and B. Group A should imagine a really good NS teacher they've once had and list the qualities of that teacher. Group B should do the same for a NNS teacher. We can then put these on the board to see if there is any overlap, encouraging students to comment on and give reasons for their choices. We could then mix the groups and ask students in pairs to list 10 qualities of good English teachers in general, regardless of their nationality. This activity lends itself very nicely to a pyramid discussion where first in pairs, than fours, groups of six, eight, etc., whole class students must agree on the list of 10 traits. It is quite likely that by the end students will have realised that both NS and NNS can share features of their ideal English teacher and that in fact your mother tongue has nothing to do with how well you teach.

To sum up, as teachers, we are not afraid to challenge numerous other misconceptions about learning English our students might have, nor to discuss various slightly controversial topics. So I cannot see why we still dread tackling native speakerism in the classroom head on. Perhaps we should overcome our fear because there is actually evidence that students do not show a clear preference for either group, but are aware of and appreciate different qualities each brings to the classroom (e.g. Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Lipovsky & Mahboob, 2010). In addition, other researchers have shown that students value traits unrelated to teachers' mother tongue, such as intelligible pronunciation (Kelch & Santana-Willamson, 2002), personal characteristics, e.g. charisma (Medgyes, 2001) and pedagogical skills (Mullock, 2010). Finally, numerous scholars have also proven that the more students are exposed to good NNS teachers, the more they appreciate their virtues (e.g. Cheung & Braine, 2007; Lipovsky & Mahboob, 2010). As a result discussing the matter of native speakerism in class could not only lead to an interesting debate, but presumably also to questioning stereotypes and prejudices, which I personally believe is something we as educators should also aim at.

By challenging native speakerism we can all contribute to a fairer ELT industry where teaching qualifications, experience and professionalism will be finally given

the importance they deserve, where learners will finally get the best teachers chosen carefully based on their credentials and not a mere accident of birth. An ELT industry where being a NS or a NNS will have ceased to matter. An ELT industry which will embrace the immense and fascinating diversity of the English language.

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